

ANNUAL STATUS AND OPTIONS REPORT 2024

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Annual Status and Options Report (ASOR) provides an overview of road infrastructure assets within Argyll and Bute Council based on 2022-23 and 2023-24 data for asset condition, previous investment, asset valuation and other relevant information. The report provides information, based upon current available data, on the condition of the asset and future options which can be considered in terms of investment. The report gives an RCI score, the **higher** the RCI score means the **poorer** the road condition is in.

The ASOR provides details on each of the following assets:

- Roads
- Footways
- Structures such as Bridges
- Street Lighting and Traffic Signals
- Street Furniture
- EV Chargers

- 1.2 It should be noted that the external Road Condition Index (RCI) report did not survey our full area with most of our Islands missed, we have therefore used last year's figures as the most up to date RCI score. The report sets out the 2023 road and associated infrastructure condition and forecasts future condition based on different proposed levels of investment.
- 1.3 The ASOR demonstrates previous investment in the Roads Reconstruction Programme in 2022-23 which provided a slight improvement to the overall Road Condition Index (RCI) from 2021-22. Whilst the condition has only improved slightly, without the increased investment from Council, the road condition would have continued to deteriorate, resulting in our road network being in an extremely poor condition. The condition surveys carried out nationally have a lag of 2 – 4 years (due to not all of the network being surveyed in one year). Argyll and Bute's condition survey is indicating a smaller percentage in the 'red' and this position is anticipated to worsen

should there be a reduction in available investment. Currently Argyll and Bute Council, although having improved recently, are listed as having the highest RCI within our family group consisting of roads authorities with similar roads networks, effectively our roads index is the poorest of the 8 family group members for rural authorities in Scotland.

- 1.4 Within the ASOR report, the respective asset groups are identified with four investment options presented to allow members to consider appropriate future funding which will allow a more informed budget setting process for the maintenance and improvement of Roads and Infrastructure assets.
- 1.5 The ASOR links into the Priority Investment Plans (PIPs) (Previously Service Asset Management Plan (SAMP)) which forms part of the overall Capital budget decision making process. The ASOR is a useful tool in assisting Members to make informed strategic decisions regarding investment of our limited Capital resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-

- Endorses the Annual Status and Options Report and the positive analytical feedback it provides and agrees to use the information for future budget setting.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report introduces the Annual Status and Options Report which makes an analytical assessment of the condition of the Council's road network and associated infrastructure as well as setting out projected conditions based on varying levels of investment.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-

- Endorses the Annual Status and Options Report and the positive analytical feedback it provides and agrees to use the information for future budget setting.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 The ASOR is a report which forms part of a suite of documents which are recommended by SCOTS for local authorities use. The documents have been developed in collaboration with all Scottish and Welsh authorities and aim to improve processes and continue the development and implementation of the wider use of recognised asset management techniques. When authorities have fully developed the use of these documents they will enable better value for money to be delivered and prudent stewardship of the road asset to be demonstrated.

4.2 SCOTS have focused on carriageway condition including backlog value and steady state figures due to carriageways being the single most valuable Council asset.

4.3 The ASOR is also a tool which elected members can use to help set priorities for investing the limited resources available to the Council.

4.4 At the Argyll and Bute Council Budget Meeting in February 2022, an £8M investment programme for both 2023/24 and 2024/25 roads reconstruction was

approved. This was further enhanced by a successful bid to the Scottish Timber Transport Scheme of £387k. This continued investment coupled with the level of revenue investment over the last few years has helped to improve the steady state road condition and ensured that we continue to keep over 50% of our road network in a Green Condition.

RCI for 2018-20 = 54.2% of roads needing improvement
RCI for 2020-22 = 49.8% of roads needing improvement
RCI for 2021-23 = 48.8% of roads needing improvement

Previous levels of investment have halted the deterioration of the surfacing, began to improve network condition and acted as a contributory factor in reducing the number of CAT 1 & 2 defects. The latest RCI survey results (listed above) clearly reflect the positive impact previous investment has made whilst contributing to achieving the corporate goals and objectives.

- 4.5 The RCI survey data is utilised along with other relevant available data such as SCRIM (sideway-force coefficient routine investigation machine), Accident Statistics, Road Hierarchy, Inspection data and local engineering judgement to develop an initial list of suitable schemes for inclusion in the road reconstruction programme. The WDM pavement management system interrogates all the available data to identify and rank potential schemes. Once a draft list is compiled further analysis is carried out by local staff to establish scheme costs, treatment options etc. this is then matched to available funding. The selection process is under regular review and has been steadily improved over time.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This ASOR report has been developed in line with the SCOTS Asset Management Project and provides a useful resource aimed at providing relevant decision makers with information which will allow a more informed choice to be made in respect of future investment options.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – The ASOR contributes towards policy for infrastructure and roads.
- 6.2 Financial – Current investment levels provide a steady state for the roads network.
- 6.3 Legal – None known.
- 6.4 HR – None known.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None known.
- 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – None known.
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – None known.

- 6.5.3 Islands – the reduction in the Ferry Prices (RET) has increased numbers of vehicles on island roads which has caused more damage to the island road network.
- 6.6 Climate Change –the impact of climate change on key infrastructure is expected to increase in the coming years.
- 6.7 Risk – road Network will deteriorate due to underfunding, as such we need to prioritise roads which may well affect island and more rural communities more.
- 6.8 Customer Service – None known.
- 6.9 The Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – None arising from this report.

**Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Infrastructure:
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – ASOR Report